

**Babylon is Falling.**

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# DISCOURSE

PREACHED IN THE MASONIC TEMPLE,

TO THE

**SOCIETY FOR CHRISTIAN UNION AND PROGRESS,**

ON

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BY ITS MINISTER,

O. A. BROWNSON.



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## DISCOURSE.

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REVELATIONS, XVIII. 11.

“AND THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH SHALL WEEP AND MOURN OVER HER; FOR NO MAN BUYETH THEIR MERCHANDIZE ANY MORE.”

THIS was said in reference to the fall of Babylon. Its force can be appreciated only by settling in our minds what the writer of this book, called Revelation, intended to shadow forth by the city of Babylon. On this point doctors disagree. Some suppose that he intended Pagan Rome, others Catholic Rome, and others still suppose that he designed to indicate in this way some great and widely influential heresy or false doctrine. Without attempting to reconcile conflicting opinions, or calling in question the justness of any of the interpretations which have been offered, I am, for my part, inclined to understand by the city of Babylon the SPIRIT OF GAIN, the Commercial Spirit, or System, which has in these last centuries spread over the world, corrupted and intoxicated all people.

I do not propose this interpretation as being certainly the true one; I will not say positively that this is what the Revelator meant; but I think it answers better to his symbolical language, than any other interpretation thereof which has been

offered. The Spirit of Gain, viewed simply in connexion with the commercial system it has created, the direction it has given to men's minds and hearts, the evil propensities it has fostered, the wicked passions it has strengthened, and the worldliness and sensuality in which it has buried kings, governments and people, may well be called, it seems to me, "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." All nations have been maddened, "intoxicated with the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."

In saying that the spirit of gain, the commercial spirit, or system, is shadowed forth under the type of the city of Babylon, I do not mean to express any opinion hostile to commerce, when commerce is confined within its legitimate province, when made, as it should be, the simple carrier of the productions of agriculture and manufactures from one place or from one country to another; nor do I mean to say aught against merchants, or to intimate that the men engaged in commerce are not as good, as virtuous as the rest of the community. I speak not against men, but against a prevailing spirit which all men partake more or less of—against a system which spreads its meshes over the whole community, and for which the whole community, not any one division of it, is accountable. The spirit against which I speak in strong terms of reprobation, extends beyond what is technically called commerce, prevails elsewhere than in cities, and works its iniquities by others than merchants.

Understanding then by the city of Babylon of the Apocalypse, the spirit of gain, the commercial spirit, or if you choose, the modern commercial system, a system of universal fraud and injustice, a system which lays the whole earth under contribution to make "princes merchants and merchants princes," the chapter from which my text is taken may be considered a prediction of its downfall. God has for the encouragement and

consolation of the saints, foretold that the system must end, that they who have lived on the toil, and sweat, and groans, and often the blood of their brethren, are to stand one day afar off weeping and wailing over the ruin of her by whom they were made rich. And unless I greatly deceive myself, there are at this moment some not to be mistaken signs that this prediction is about to be fulfilled. The system of fraud, deception and injustice, which men's greediness for wealth, for this world's goods, has built up, if I am not grossly in error, stands tottering, ready at every moment to fall with a crash that shall make the world tremble.

The embarrassment in the commercial world, of which we hear and feel so much, is no temporary embarrassment produced by local and temporary causes. It proceeds from causes which lie deep, which go to the very heart of every community. It is one of the indications of a contest which is commenced between two forces into which the whole human race is now divided, — of the shock occasioned by the meeting of the two causes which have drawn mankind out into two opposing and hostile camps. It is not the United States Bank, it is not the Deposit System, it is not a mere question of government, or finance, which divides the human family to-day. Governments and banks, finance regulations, and treasury circulars are but the instruments or the effects of the contest now raging, the means made use of by one party or the other to gain some advantage or to ward off some attack. He who would comprehend the real cause of the present financial convulsion must look far beyond such things as these.

Whoever has paid much attention to the movements which have occurred in our own times, the controversies which have been stirred up, the measures proposed, adopted or rejected by governments and rulers, and the divisions which are every where taking place, cannot have failed to perceive that there is on the one hand a strong, decided and steady tendency of the masses towards equality in political, social and property rela-

tions, and that on the other hand there is a collecting and concentrating of forces in defence of old privileges, old abuses, and the hitherto universally prevalent inequality. No one who has eyes, it seems to me, can fail to see that the human race is drawn out and arrayed under separate banners, on which are inscribed words of far different import. On the banner which I see floating over one of the camps, I read to me, I will confess it, inspiring words, **LIBERTY, EQUALITY, PEACE**; and on that which waves over the other I read **PRIVILEGE, INEQUALITY, WAR**. These two banners wave in view of each other; these two armies are waiting but the signal to rush to the terrible encounter, if indeed the battle have not already begun.

I ask your attention, my friends, for a few moments, to the consideration of the two causes espoused by these two hostile divisions of our brethren. Stand aloof as we will, we shall be drawn into the combat, and be compelled to give or receive our share of the blows, which must pass and repass. Well then doth it behoove us to make ourselves acquainted with the question at issue, the cause espoused by either party, that we may choose our side understandingly, and enlist under the banner of truth and justice, not under that of falsehood and iniquity. Let us then, in our minds, place ourselves upon an eminence which overlooks the two camps, and inquire what mean these words inscribed upon their respective banners.

What mean these words, **Liberty, Equality, Peace**? Or, to simplify the inquiry, and to give something like unity to my remarks, What means this word **Equality**? What do they mean by it who have inscribed it on their banners? Do they mean that all men are equally wise, equally good, entitled to equal shares of the products of art and industry? Not at all. Do they mean that all men are born with equal capacities, able to reach the same intellectual heights, and that they deserve equal consideration and influence? Not at all.

No man with his eyes open can adopt the doctrine that all

men are born with equal capacities. All are born with the same nature, with the elements of the same virtue and intelligence, the same moral and religious greatness, but they are born with varying capacities. Their abilities differ. One man is weak and timid, another is strong and brave; one is low in his aims, feeble in his resolves, and narrow in his views, another has lofty purposes, invincible resolutions, far-reaching thought and creative genius; one perceives only a few objects just around him, and is utterly incapable of putting three ideas together, another opens up to himself new worlds upon worlds, forms plans for national and individual melioration and progress at once minute, complex, bold, comprehensive and practical. The soldiers in the camp of equality are by no means prepared to war for the principle, that all men are born with equal powers of mind, though they may contend, and perhaps justly, that God has made less difference between man and man than is commonly believed.

There are differences in men's capacities which it is impossible wholly to obliterate. Education may modify, lessen or exaggerate them, but it never has been able, and I do not believe that it ever will be able, to destroy them. No education can make every man a Homer, a Milton, a Locke, a Washington, a Franklin. Perhaps it is well that there are differences. If all men had minds of precisely the same compass, precisely the same thoughts, and hearts of precisely the same feelings and aspirations, this would be a dull and monotonous world. There would be little room for enterprise, few inducements to exertion, small ambition to excel, and nothing to urge men onward and upward in the glorious career of perfectibility.

Nor do the soldiers of equality contend that all men should have equal influence, equal power over political and social matters. They do not, as some suppose, war against aristocracy, when by aristocracy is understood, as should be, the government of the wisest and best. The wisest and best, wisdom and virtue, have a legitimate right to rule in church,

society and state. No friend to equality objects to this. No man, no full grown man, desires the rule, or rather misrule, of ignorance and vice. Every wise and good man is an aristocrat, and no one, however staunch a democrat he may be, contends for a government in which ignorance, in which the base and corrupt bear sway.

The controversy which has raged on this point, arises from the adoption of a false standard of worth, in consequence of which they who are not have often been called the wisest and best. The test of wisdom and virtue usually adopted is a false test. Men are placed in the ranks of the aristocracy who have no business there, and invested with authority, when they have nothing to support their right to it but a worldly success, obtained by craft, adroitness and inhumanity. It is against these that they war, who are supposed to war against aristocracy. Not against wisdom and virtue do they gird on their armor and bend the bow, but against their counterfeits; not against the legitimate sovereign do they rush to the battle, but against the usurper, who by craft and cunning, by his baseness and iniquity, or by the carelessness, corruption, or too great confidence of the people, has placed himself in the throne to which he has no right.

That young soldier of equality, whose step is so proud and whose eye flashes such deep indignation, wars not against the legitimate influence of mental and moral superiority. He complains not that others have stronger minds, sounder judgments, warmer hearts, a more passionate love of the true and beautiful, and a more commanding influence than he. He is not disturbed that the republic has greater, wiser, better men than he. They wrong him, who accuse him of envy, and allege that he enlists on the side of equality because he cannot bear to see any one above him. It is not so. Err he may, but he is not without a soul, without a heart. His bosom burns, it may be, with as generous a love of virtue, his heart swells with as noble and as disinterested sentiments, and he moves



by as pure and as lofty motives as any of them who war against him. Say not that he is envious, that he seeks only to bring down to his own level, the wisdom and virtue he is conscious he cannot equal. It is not so. He stands in religious awe of the God-created, the God-patented nobility of our race, and prostrates himself before the truly great man as the outspoken symbol of the Divinity.

I repeat it, he wars not against aristocracy as such, in itself, but against the false and unjust standard of greatness which now obtains — against clothing directly or indirectly with power over their brethren, men whose influence proceeds from no real merit, who have neither wisdom or virtue to sustain them, and who are at the topmost round of the social ladder only by virtue of their success in deceiving their fellow beings, or in availing themselves of the talents and industry of others. He wars against that social system, in which they who best understand the art of buying and selling human beings, or working them as men work their oxen and horses, are accounted the wisest and best, and do really control all the affairs of the nation, devise all financial schemes, governmental and educational measures, and have in their own hands the moulding of individual character and the forming of the public conscience. He and his comrades band together to dethrone the misbegotten power of wealth, of fraud and injustice, to destroy artificial distinctions and factitious influences, and to restore, reinaugurate virtue, truth, justice in their rightful dominion as sovereigns of the world. He is indignant at hearing men lauded to the heavens, whose ends are selfish, whose thoughts are low, whose aspirations are downwards, and who are strangers to whatever ennobles man, or dignifies human nature. He is ready to own that he is unworthy to unloose even the latchet of the shoes of him whom God sends to baptize the people with the Holy Ghost and with fire, but he has sworn in the very depths of his being, that he will not fall down at the sound of sackbut, psaltry and harp, before the

golden image set up for him to worship. Rather than do that, he will brave the fiery furnace, though heated seven times hotter than it is wont to be heated.

Nor do the advocates of equality contend for equal wealth. They do not ask that all shall share equally the gains of industry. But they do believe that God has given the earth to the children of men, and they demand that it be left open to all. They contend that the few have no right to spread their broad hands over the whole surface of the globe, so that the many shall not find whereon to set their feet, so that the poor man shall find no obscure corner on which he may erect an humble cabin, in which his children may behold the light,\* or his bones at last be laid to be absorbed into their mother's bosom. The whole soil of the globe is monopolized. The few hold it for themselves, and their children, and their children's children. And therefore must the children of the poor be born naked and destitute indeed, be naked, destitute, wretched, so long as God lets them live, unless by ingenuity, by fraud, by some means or other they can contrive to dispossess the children of the few of some portions of that which was left them by their fathers. Hence the war which men have been carrying on. Society for long ages has been in perpetual strife. They who have a portion of this world's goods have been struggling to keep what they have and to get more, and they who have not, have been struggling to dispossess them who have. This struggle passes in the business world by the respectable name of competition, but, be its name what it may, that of saint or sinner, it is an ungodly struggle, and the ill effects of it are now becoming apparent to every man, woman and child throughout christendom.

The soldiers of equality have taken up arms to put an end to this struggle, and that is what they mean by that word **PEACE** you see inscribed on their banner. This struggle can

\* Vide Paroles d' un Croyant. Par M. de La Mennais.

be ended only by giving to all, not equal wealth, but equal chances to wealth. They do not fight for equal property, but for equal chances, that all may have equal chances to wealth opened to them. Now the chances are unequal. Some are born with the right to live in ease and luxury, to every advantage which wealth can purchase, while others are born only with the right to work or starve. There is nothing equal in this. One is set forward, to say the least, two-thirds of the distance, and the other must run three times as far in the same time, in order to reach the goal at the same instant. And what is, perhaps, more aggravating than all, he who has three times the distance of the other to run, is set down as a poor runner if he do not come out ahead.

To have equal chances all must have the same starting-point, and this is all that the advocates of equality demand in relation to wealth. They say, "The prize to the swiftest runner," but at the same time, "Let all start together." They say it is wrong to give one an advantage by setting him forward, or by compelling his competitor to carry weight. Their principle is, "Equal chances to all, and to each one according to his ability." But this cannot be realized until we revise our notions in some respects concerning what ought to be, or ought not to be, accounted property, and the tenure by which property can be legitimately held. It is generally contended, that property is a creature of legislation, and that man has, and can have, no right to property but that which the law gives him. But this I deny. Man has a natural right to property, and the law can give him no valid right to call that his property which is not so by a natural right. Law never does, and never can, create right. Right is prior to law, superior to law, and is the only thing which can give to the legislative enactment the character of law. So long as the legislative enactment remains, especially in a free government like ours, whatever its character, it should be respected and obeyed; but if it be not founded in justice, it may and should be altered, amended

annulled, or superseded. That only, in truth and justice, is a man's property, which he himself creates or produces by his own industry, or, which is the same thing, that which he obtains in equitable exchange for his own productions. If I call any thing my property which I have not produced, or obtained in exchange for what I have produced, I call something my property which is the production of another, or I contend that my claims to the gifts of God are paramount to those of my equals. All men have an equal right to the gifts of God. God is a common father, he showers his blessings upon all, but upon no one in particular. I have, then, no right to monopolize them. If I call that my property which another has created or produced, I strike at the foundation of all property, and do violence to the only principle by which I can legitimate my right to my own productions.

In saying that the earth should be open to all her children, and that all should have equal chances, I say nothing in favor of an equal division, nor in favor of any division of property. Nothing seems to me more unjust, than what is commonly understood by an equal division of property. Every man, with the least possible claims to correct moral feelings, must at once revolt at the bare thought of giving one man's property, or any portion of the gains of his industry, to another. Every man has a sacred and divine right to the proceeds of his own industry, and if one produces more than another, he should have more. This is just, and whatever is just is equal. Enable all to start fairly, with no other disadvantages than nature herself imposes, secure to every man the gains of his own industry, and you have established all the equality as to property relations which can be demanded, and all the inequality of which any one ever dreams of complaining, will be removed, or at least will very soon wear itself out.

When this shall be done, men will be so nearly equal in their property that the equality most desired will be easily secured. Equality in property is not, or should not, be desired \*

as an end, but as a means ; and is desirable no farther than it tends to secure equality as it concerns mental, moral and religious progress. The means for this progress are now very unequally and artificially distributed. Millions of children are now so born, that they must live and die, and leave no trace, but the corruption they breed, of their having been. Nineteen twentieths of the human race, taking the world over, are doomed, by the very condition in which they are born, to mere brutishness. Forever must they grope in darkness. No star glimmers through the gloom of their eternal night, pre-saging a day-dawn and the uprising of a sun of science to shed on them his beams of life and glory. How many of them are born, too, with the germs of a godlike virtue, born with all the intrinsic power to be the prophets of humanity ! How many of them, but for the cold and friendless hand which smooths their infant pillow, or rocks their cradle, might outdo and outshine the mightiest and most world-renowned of those whose names have now a magic spell to kindle the youthful spirit, and urge it on to *déeds* of true glory ! Say not that God has made them inferior to their more favored brethren ; say not that God blasts them in the bud, and dooms them to eternal barrenness ; say not that God creates such richly endowed beings, as is the most miserably furnished human soul, but to live and die and be no more, as the beasts of the field, or the reptiles of the dust. It is not so. While one portion are favored with libraries, instructors, with all that wealth, art, science and genius can do to develop their minds, and make them grow up men, others are pent up in workshops, stifled in factories, or compelled to work beyond their strength to support an impoverished, a wretched, an idle, drunken, improvident or avaricious father.

If the advocates of equality contend for equal chances to wealth, it is not because they crave wealth for its own sake ; it is not because they are supreme lovers of wealth ; but it is because they would command the means of training up all

the children of the community to be really men and women ; because they would obtain an 'open field and fair play,' a theatre on which man may enact all his greatness, develop all his faculties harmoniously, in all their beauty and majesty ; because they would place all the riches of intellect, taste, refinement, virtue, rational religion, within the reach of every human being ; and could they but do this they would care little who should have mere physical wealth. If men would not monopolize the lights of science, and the pleasures of refined culture, they might be welcome to God's physical gifts. Poverty we can bear ; we care not that our hands are hard, that our faces are sun-burnt, and our bodies bent with toil ; we care not that our coats are threadbare and patched, and that our food is scanty and coarse, if we be not debarred from access to the pleasures of intellect and taste, if we but have free scope for the full and just development of our nobler and diviner nature. Let science open to us his treasures, and art lavish upon us her beauties, and take, if ye will, partizans of privilege, take if ye will the mere pelf. Ye can at best enjoy it but for a day, before ye will deposite it at the mouth of the tomb, to be as poor and destitute as the poorest.

Such is the cause espoused by the camp, over which floats in the breeze, the banner on which are inscribed, liberty, equality, peace. The division of mankind arranged under this banner demands equal rights, equal chances, equal chances to wealth, knowledge, virtue, freedom ; equal opportunities to develop and exert all the faculties of human nature in the service of truth and justice ; and it promises as the result, love, union, peace. If it triumph it assures us that men will feel and live as brothers, and that the songs of brotherly love shall rise on the air, and swell the sublime chorus of heaven itself.

Let us now turn to the other camp. We need not gaze long to perceive what it is, and to learn the cause it espouses. The words inscribed on its banner, *privilege, inequality, war,*

are intelligible enough, and we have the experience of a thousand ages to explain them. Privilege, what means this word privilege? In its literal import it means a private law, a law made expressly to favor an individual. It is distinguished from the municipal law in that the municipal law is general, and is intended to effect all the members of the city alike, while the privilege or private law is special, and intended to confer an exclusive benefit or advantage upon some one or more individuals. It is at once the offspring and the parent of injustice. By giving to one member of the city or of the community an advantage over another, it creates an artificial inequality between the one favored, and the rest of the community, which cannot fail on one side to provoke a strife for like or greater special favors, and on the other to excite envy and hostility towards the specially favored, and the result can be nothing but *war*.

I regret that I have neither the time nor the room to sketch to you the history of the party of privilege. I assure you it would be interesting and instructive, and some day I may attempt it. The principle of this party is to reap without sowing, and to enjoy without producing. It would be wrong to say that its members are not working men. They work, and I am inclined to believe that they work harder than the workingmen, properly so called; but they work not to produce, but to make what others produce pass into their own possession. The people, in their estimation, were created for them to ride, or to appropriate to their pleasure or profit.

Formerly the main business of this party was war and plunder, latterly it has become commerce and manufacture. To a great extent it has now laid aside the sword, and taken up the pen; and instead of military tactics, it now studies arithmetic, and leaving off killing it takes to what properly deserves to be called swindling. That many of this party are ignorant of the real tendency of their practices is most cheerfully conceded. Very few of them comprehend the system

they adopt. They do not perceive that though it may be sport to them, it is death to others. They have always heard it dignified with the titles of honorable and respectable; they know the advantages they derive from pursuing it, and there is no dearth of priests to tell them that the sufferings they can but see around them is not occasioned by their injustice, but is a mere godsend, sent by the Deity for some inscrutable, but to himself, no doubt, satisfactory reason. Did they know what they are doing, did they comprehend that they can be what they are only at the expense of millions of victims, it is no stretch of charity to believe that they would desist, yield up their privileges, and consent to take their chance with the rest. God, let us hope, will forgive them, and let us too, their victims, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

In former times this party was less numerous than at present. The result of the progress of civilization thus far, has not been to elevate in any conceivable degree, the producing classes, as such, but merely to increase the number of those the producing classes must feed. The progress of science, the various improvements and new inventions in the arts of production and for abridging labor, and of which we hear such loud boasts, have not as yet, so far as I can see, in the least lightened the burdens of working men and working women, properly so called; they have merely facilitated the means by which a poor man, a producer, may pass to the class of the non-producers, from one of the ridden to be one of the riders. This may indeed be thought a benefit in his particular case, but no man can fail to perceive that it adds to the number of those the producers must feed, while it diminishes the number who are to feed them. It increases the weight, while it decreases the strength which is to sustain it. This increase of the burden on the one hand, and decrease of strength on the other, would have made the burden long since intolerable, it is true, had it not been for science, and the introduction of labor-saving machinery. By means of this



machinery the producing classes have been able to sustain a weight which they otherwise could not have sustained. But with this machinery, as a class, they have had their burdens not in the least diminished. The working men, fewer in proportion indeed than they were, work as hard as ever, and in point of fact, much harder than formerly.

But the fact I have mentioned the increase of the riders and the diminution of the ridden, has not been without immense results. In those old times which some regret, and which, had the present no future, I too should regret, when the number of riders was pretty well fixed, and the people knew the weight they must carry, were withal accustomed to their burdens and acquainted with the road they must travel, when it never chanced, or rarely chanced, that a footman became a rider, or that a rider was unhorsed and degraded to the rank of a footman, things moved along somewhat quietly, and, to say the least, in tolerable order. So long as riders were deemed such by virtue of their birth, or by the grace of God, the footmen-born, or the God-neglected, never dreamed of becoming riders. They considered themselves, if they considered at all, born to be ridden, at least to go on foot, and they studied to be contented with their lot. They supposed themselves in their true position, and they dared aspire to no other. But these multiplied facilities for passing from a footman to a rider, from one who feeds others to one whom others feed, from one who works for others to one for whom others work, have unsettled every thing. When one man by his native energy, by the force of his own talents, leaped the chasm which separated the plebeian from the patrician, when one of the lowest footmen was seen to make himself a graceful, renowned and lordly rider, bearing away the prize even from the native-born cavalier, a strange, an unwonted, an unaccountable feeling seized the whole class of footmen, a new and daring ambition took possession of their souls. As one after another was seen to pass from their ranks to the ranks

above them, another after another, another and another wished to do it. The whole class soon became dissatisfied with their condition. Every one felt himself in a false position, became weary and disgusted with his lot, and desirous of following the example of those who had exchanged it for a more favored one. Each one said to himself, "Why may I not reap without sowing, and enjoy without producing, as well as others?"

It is in this dissatisfaction with their lot, occasioned by the example of so many of their number passing into the ranks of the privileged, that we must look for that universal strife we every where witness among the workingmen to become members of the more favored classes. It is hardly possible to conceive of the eagerness with which they have pressed forward after privileges, to become members of the privileged classes. In former times this eagerness would have been repressed by the sword or gunpowder; but in these days the sword and gunpowder are going out of fashion; besides, it is found that they are dangerous tools to handle, and may sometimes be employed with advantage against those who first resort to their use. The only method of repression which has been left is, for the privileged to be less exclusive, and to share their privileges with the most forward and importunate of the clamorers. The footmen have always rallied round certain men, whom they look upon as their friends, whom the riders call the ringleaders of the mob. When the mob has become too strong or too impetuous, the privileged have found that the best way to disperse them, is to buy up their leaders, to receive them into their own ranks, and make them gentlemen. By this means they deprive the people of their leaders, satisfy the people for a time with the belief that their demands are granted, because their leaders are received into favor, or throw them into confusion, and compel them to disperse and desist from their purpose till they can find new leaders. This process has been going on ever since the old fashioned military nobility formed an alliance with the commercial nobility.

As the door into the upper classes was found to be opened to some of the working men or producers, from the fact, that hundreds were seen to enter, and afterwards beheld on the balconies hand and glove with the privileged, so all the producers pressed forward to enter. But as wealth was the only passport, the only certain right to entrance, hence the universal passion for wealth which disgraces humanity, the perfect madness of the people everywhere to become suddenly rich; hence the increased activity given to the productive arts, the enterprise and the numerous schemes for becoming quickly rich, and hence too banks and banking, stocks, fancy stocks, stock-jobbing, speculation, overtrading, and whatever else may have tended to produce the present wide spread and ruinous commercial embarrassment.

Whatever we may think of the times in which we are struggling to live, of the commotions we see everywhere around us, however we may blame government and its recent measures, the United States Bank, the Deposit Banks, all other Banks and their friends or opponents, we must look for the real cause of what we see and deplore in that one word, privilege; in the unequal and therefore unjust legislation which fosters and sustains a privileged class, which obtains its wealth and consideration by transferring the earnings of others to its own pocket, and to the fact, strange as it may seem, that people almost every where would rather ride than be ridden.

The camp we are now considering is filled with the privileged and their retainers, with those who have hitherto arranged all things in state, society, and church, to their own liking, for their own private advantage. Their right to continue to be the privileged, and to arrange all things for their own private advantage, is called in question, is denied, is opposed, and it is in defence of this pretended right, that they have taken up arms. They are, you see, about to fight for privilege, for a system of legislation, and a social order, of

which the best fruits are inequality, and universal war. Not willingly will they give up their advantages. Their power has been somewhat weakened, but they are yet strong, and they will make a desperate defence.

The immediate cause of hostilities is the fact that the privileged have become alarmed, and find it necessary to close their doors to the admission of new members. If all men should become sharers in their privileges, their privileges would cease to be privileges. If all should become riders, it would be precisely the same thing as to have no riders at all. When there are none to be ridden, there are none that can ride, and if all rise to the class of riders, there will be none to constitute the class of the ridden. This the unprivileged classes have themselves at length become able to comprehend. They have heretofore thought nothing of elevating their class, but have struggled with all their might, to become as individuals members of the privileged classes, but they now perceive that, though some of their number have passed, and many now may pass from among them, and swell the number of those they must support, all can not, nor even the majority, and they have therefore wisely concluded to dispense with privilege altogether. Against privilege then, in defence of equal rights, equal chances then, these have armed themselves, and taken the field.

Such are the camps before us, such are the two parties into which mankind are now divided, and such is the contest which now rages. Peace between these two parties is henceforth out of the question. There may be a truce, a cessation of hostilities from time to time, but no solid enduring peace. Do what we will, say what we may, ever will hostilities break out afresh, and ever too with increased rancor and fierceness. The two causes are hostile in their very nature, and can never co-exist but in a state of war. One party or the other must be exterminated before the war will end.

It has been said that we are in the midst of a revolution.

They who said so, perhaps were not aware of the truth they uttered. We are in the midst of a revolution, a bloodless one I hope, but a revolution to which all those which have been will be counted mere child's play. Calm as society may seem to a superficial spectator, I assure you it is moved to its very foundations, and is in universal agitation. The question which is now debated, and to which entire humanity listens, is one which reaches infinitely further than the most celebrated of the questions heretofore debated. The question to-day is not between one reigning family and another, between one people and another, between one form of government and another, but a question between privilege and equal rights, between law sanctioned, law fenced in privilege, age-consecrated privilege, and a hitherto unheard of power, a new power just started from the darkness in which it has slumbered since creation day, the *power of honest industry*. The strange name borne by this new-born power, may deceive some as to its strength and merits, but though they may deem it an infant, they may be assured they will find it an Herculean one. The contest is now between the privileged and the unprivileged, and a terrible one it is. The slave snaps his fetters, the peasant feels an unwonted strength nerve his arm, the *people* rise in stern and awful majesty, and demand in strange tones their ever despised and hitherto denied rights. They rise and swear in a deep and startling oath that *justice shall reign*. Let those who feed on the labors of others hear, and know, that not with a look or a word will they frighten or charm them down.

Not to this country alone, nor chiefly, is this revolution confined. It reaches the old world. The millions down-trodden for ages by Kings, Hierarchies, and Nobilities, awake. Kings put their hands to their heads to feel if their crowns be there; hierarchies lash themselves and cry mightily unto Baal; nobilities tremble for their privileges; time-cemented and moss covered state fabrics reel and totter; all who live on abuses

seem to themselves to see the hand-writing on the walls of their palaces, and to feel every thing giving way beneath them.

How this contest will end God alone knows. The period in which we live is indeed an eventful one. Events are hourly occurring of the most grave significance, and where all will end I hardly dare conjecture. There are moments when I despair, when the future is overspread with thick clouds, and no light reaches my eye, except now and then a lightning flash, which merely makes the darkness more awful. I look on with fear and trembling. It is a time for men to hold their breath in expectation. Still the prevailing state of my mind inclines to a favorable termination of this fearful war. As a lingering lightning flash throws back the darkness, I seem to catch a glimpse of the Son of Man seated in the clouds of heaven, surrounded by the ministers of his justice, and the agents of his power; and there comes to my ear, as the voice of many waters, "The doom of Babylon is sealed," I seem to see the storm commissioned, to hear the rushing of the mighty wind that is to sink her ships in the ocean, and to prostrate herself with a thundercrash that shakes the world. This may be all a mere vision. But I must believe that the great day of reckoning has come, that the saints are to be avenged, and justice and truth henceforth to govern the world. God grant that I be not deceived.



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